

# CURRENT TOPICS

WHATEVER THE INTENTION OR PURPOSE of the Colombian senate in disapproving of the treaty, we are told by the Washington correspondent for the Philadelphia Public Ledger that it is recognized by this government that the effect is equivalent to rejection and that the president will therefore proceed further in accordance with the act passed at the last session of congress. The Public Ledger correspondent explains: "The act of congress upon which the treaty is based, and which provides for the construction of an isthmian canal, also provides that in the event of the president being unable to secure from Colombia control of the necessary territory 'within a reasonable time and upon reasonable terms,' he shall take certain steps that are specified, and 'shall, through the aid of the said isthmian canal commission, cause to be excavated and constructed a ship canal and waterway' by what is known as the Nicaragua route. With this mandate of the law, and the practical rejection of the treaty by Colombia, this government is disposed to regard the 'reasonable time' specified in the act as having become exhausted, and, therefore, steps are being taken to comply with the alternative proposition authorized by the act to construct a canal through Costa Rica and Nicaragua."

IT IS SAID THAT SECRETARY HAY HAS invited certain senators and representatives to a conference to be held in Washington, at which conference the canal question will be considered. The act of congress provides that the president must obtain for the United States perpetual control by treaty of the necessary territory in Costa Rica and Nicaragua for the canal before beginning the work of construction. This concession has already been obtained from the two countries named in protocols agreed upon between them and the United States in December, 1900. The Public Ledger Correspondent says: "The canal treaty was ratified by the United States senate only after a protracted debate and after thorough consideration of the amount of money to be paid and the extent of the jurisdiction to be exercised by the United States over the territory to be traversed by the canal. The disapproval of the treaty by the Colombian senate was mainly on the ground that its requirements in the matter of transfer of territorial jurisdiction or sovereignty could not be legally granted, and the negative action of the Colombian senate was coupled with a measure providing for a joint committee to give further consideration to this question, in the expectation that the alleged constitutional barrier would be removed. It is recognized here that this movement, however sincere, involves great delay, and that it is by no means certain that the settlement will be favorable to the requirements of the United States. Moreover, the existing feeling in the states of Panama and Cauca, which is one of general discontent bordering on revolution over the rejection of the treaty, tends to discourage further efforts to induce Colombia to grant the required concessions. With a revolution in Panama having for its object a separation from Colombia and the establishment of an independent republic, this government could not enter upon the work of building a canal, at least until there should be a permanent settlement of the strife and the country restored to order."

TIMOTHY KECK, A PROMINENT MANUFACTURER at Johnstown, N. Y., recently gave to a correspondent for the St. Louis Republic some interesting statements with respect to the connection of Congressman Littauer with various contracts obtained from the government. In his interview with the Republic correspondent, Mr. Keck deliberately charged this member of congress with conspiring with himself and others to keep the price on gloves for the army at an unnecessarily high figure. Mr. Keck challenges an investigation of the charges he makes and says that he is willing to make affidavit of the truthfulness of his statements. He expresses the hope that the investigation into the Littauer contracts will be thorough and he gives the names of various manufacturers in gloves and others whom he says can furnish information that will be of value if the investigation is not to be for whitewashing purposes.

PREVIOUS TO 1896, WHEN MR. LITTAUER was first sent to Washington as a member of congress, Mr. Keck had been a contractor dealing with the government. The Republic correspondent says: "In ten years he had twenty-five contracts for supplying gloves and caps for the army, every one of the contracts having been obtained after an open competition and an awarding to the lowest bidder. Since 1896 he has had only three minor contracts, though on several occasions he has submitted a bid lower than that of his competitors. He charges that favoritism has been shown, and that though it is impossible to prove that it has been done at the suggestion of Mr. Littauer, contracts have been awarded to men who are little more than Littauer's dummy, at figures above those submitted by other bidders. He gives dates to prove what he says and he furnished the figures."

IT IS POINTED OUT BY THIS SAME CORRESPONDENT that "at present Mr. Keck is not permitted to bid for government supplies because of his having entered into a combination with other bidders who put a certain price on a lot of caps for the army." In his interview with the Republic correspondent, Mr. Keck exhibited letters showing that Congressman Littauer had sent him at least one check as a reward for fixing a bid for a lot of gloves at a figure that would not interfere with the bid made by William Topp, whose factory at Johnstown, N. Y., it is claimed, is practically owned by Congressman Littauer. Mr. Keck says that all he asks is that there be a thorough and impartial investigation. He says that he was fairly successful until Mr. Littauer was sent to congress and he declares that the present expose is the result of an attempt by Littauer to obtain through the courts the profits accruing from certain contracts which, under the laws of the country, Mr. Littauer had no right to have any interest in.

MR. KECK EXHIBITED TO THE REPUBLIC correspondent the originals of a number of contracts that he had obtained from the government before Mr. Littauer became influential as a member of congress, and producing other papers relating to the period since 1896, Mr. Keck said: "Here are the contracts I have succeeded in obtaining since 1896. Hard times came upon me and I even went to Mr. Littauer, asking him to give me the same privileges he gave to men outside the district. I told him that I would do the work at the same figure that others did it and though it was a mere pittance, he refused to do that until he learned that I might cut under his prices. Then he sent for and he paid me either not to bid or to put my figure in as he directed. For some time I did not realize what was happening, then I say that Mr. Littauer was in the business for all there was in it, and I went to him to see if I couldn't get a share of the work. That was more than three years ago, when there was a good contract to be let. I saw Mr. Littauer in the presence of William Topp, who has since died. I talked with him about the contract, but nothing came of it. Mr. Topp obtained the contract. Previous to 1900, E. R. Lyon had been the bidder for Mr. Littauer, the present disclosures, as I have said, resulting from their falling out. Mr. Lyon was the principal in the bankruptcy proceedings and Mr. Littauer objected to his being discharged, that Mr. Lyon owed him a large amount of money, about \$18,000. Then Lyon's books were taken into court and it was quickly demonstrated that Mr. Littauer had been deriving the profits in the contracts with the government. Well, after Mr. Littauer got through with Mr. Lyon he took up Mr. Topp. It happened that a contract was to be let in August, 1900, and Mr. Littauer learned that I intended to bid. He sent for me and asked me to keep out. I agreed to do so on his terms. The contract was awarded to Mr. Topp, August 17, 1900, and just ten days later Mr. Littauer sent me his check for \$400 in payment for doing as he suggested."

AT THE SMALL VILLAGE OF OBER-EICHWALD, in Bohemia, is to be found a church building which was first built in Venice and then taken to pieces and transferred to its present location. A cablegram to the Chicago Inter-Ocean under date of Prague, August 15, says: "Prince

Clary Aldringen, who is lord of the manor of Ober-Eichwald, admired very greatly the church of the Madonna dell' Orta in Venice, and by his orders an exact model was built in Venice, and then in sections transferred to Bohemia, where it was erected. The building is 170 feet long, and the tower 160 feet high. Veronese marble and Istrian limestone have been used in the construction of the church, which is an exact copy of the Venetian original."

ONE OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE POST-office department in Russia is known as the "black cabinet." The St. Petersburg correspondent of the Chicago Chronicle says: "The 'black cabinet,' long in existence in Russia, has been reorganized and enlarged and a part of the postal and telegraph building has been assigned to it, where letters will be sent up by elevator as fast as they arrive. The 'bureau of exploration' is divided into three sections. The first, under Mr. Rentzky, will examine letters from foreign countries; the second, under Mr. Dragonnow, will look after Russian letters, and the third, under Mr. Faber, will watch over letters and packages leaving the country. Every compromising letter will be submitted to the police. There is in the 'black cabinet' a register containing the names of all the persons who receive or send letters suspected of being treasonable."

PERHAPS FEW PEOPLE KNOW THAT there is one place in the world where the sun sets twice daily. This place is said to be at Leek, in Staffordshire, England. The Chicago Tribune, which tells the story, says: "The reason of this is that a jagged mountain is situated to the west of the town, and in the evening the sun sets behind it and darkness comes on. Then is the first sunset, the gas lamps are lit, and apparently night has set in. But it has not, for in the space of an hour or so the sun reappears again through the opening at the side of the mountain and daylight again appears. Artificial lights are extinguished and daylight again prevails until the sun descends below the opening and the second sunset follows and night comes to stay."

THE STORY OF AN INTERESTING RELIC is told by a correspondent of the Boston Transcript in this way: "At the office of the Pacific coast secretary of the American Board may be seen the first Morning Star Bible. October 12, 1866, this Bible was given to the Morning Star, the far-famed missionary ship of the Pacific sea, by the children of Rev. Charles J. and Martha T. Hill of Gloversville, N. Y., 'in grateful remembrance of deliverance in shipwreck, June 22, 1866.' It bears on the fly-leaf the scriptural inscription: 'For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears and my feet from falling.' Further inscriptions are: 'Saved from the wreck of the second Morning Star, October 18, 1869. Transferred to the third Morning Star, July 22, 1871.' 'Saved from the wreck of the third Morning Star, February 22, 1884. Transferred to the fourth Morning Star, June 22, 1885. Transferred to the Carrie and Annie, June 7, 1903.' A few weeks ago the Carrie and Annie was leased to a San Francisco shipping firm for several months and this Bible was brought to Congregational headquarters in San Francisco. Along with the Bible was brought the old Morning Star Album, which contains pictures of many of the captains, some of the missionaries, and American Board secretaries. These books will be disposed of as the board may order."

GREAT EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO SECURE accurate maps of the different sections of the Philippines. A general order was recently issued by Major General Davis, in command of the division of the Philippines, directing that great liberality be exercised in the granting of leaves of absence to the army officers for the purpose of hunting. A Washington dispatch to the St. Louis Globe-Democrat gives this order as concluding in this way: "When the territory is new it should be the desire of every officer availing himself of this privilege to furnish a reliable map of the country traversed, remembering that a map is the most indispensable supplement to the